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9 July 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: DDCI Briefing of CIA Subcommittees of Senate Armed Services and Senate Appropriations, 9 July 1965, 3 p. m.

1. The Deputy Director, accompanied by Mr. Houston, briefed the CIA Subcommittees of Senate Armed Services and Senate Appropriations on 9 July 1965. Present for the CIA Subcommittee of Senate Armed Services were Senators Stennis and Saltonstall and Mr. T. Edward Braswell, Staff Member. Present for the CIA Subcommittee of Senate Appropriations was Senator Young.
2. The DDCI began with a briefing of the current situation in Vietnam, emphasizing the Viet Cong sealing-off action of the central portion of South Vietnam, and then proceeded with the prepared text (same briefing paper used for the Mahon Subcommittee at 11 a. m., 9 July). Senator Young asked if the oil companies were making deliveries to both sides, and Mr. Helms pointed out that when oil was delivered for the South Vietnamese the Viet Cong could capture what they needed. In answer to a further question, he said we are able to supply our own forces and the South Vietnamese with sufficient oil. Senator Stennis asked about the economic difficulties, and Mr. Helms pointed out that the inability to have ground transportation north and south put economic pressure particularly on Saigon. Senator Saltonstall asked about the morale in South Vietnam, and Mr. Helms said considering the time this type of warfare had gone on it is surprisingly good.

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3. Senator Stennis asked about the replacement of Ambassador Taylor by Ambassador Lodge, and Mr. Helms said so far as he knew this was a Presidential decision in which he saw no suggestion of displeasure with Ambassador Taylor or significant change in policy. Senator Saltonstall said he heard that 19 South Vietnamese battalions had been made combat ineffective since May and asked how many battalions the South Vietnamese had altogether and how many soldiers there were in a battalion. This information was supplied in detail after the meeting. Senator Young asked if, in connection with U. S. air raids, including the B-52 raids, the Viet Cong were forewarned by high-level penetrations in the South Vietnamese government. Mr. Helms replied that there are undoubtedly penetrations and it is probable that warnings are given. Senator Stennis asked if the B-52 raids were worthwhile, and Mr. Helms pointed out they would be much more valuable if there could be a follow up by ground troops but there were insufficient troops to do this effectively. Senator Saltonstall asked if our intelligence can tell where the Viet Cong are, pointing out their penetration of the U. S. installation at Da Nang as an instance. Mr. Helms pointed out that this was in effect a suicide squad which rehearsed the operation for three weeks and did come well within the perimeter.

4. Mr. Helms then followed the text on the situation in North Vietnam and emphasized that the Russians appeared to be taking their time in completing the SAM sites around Hanoi; if they had wanted to they could have completed them far earlier. Senator Saltonstall asked Mr. Helms if he agreed with Mr. Alsop's column that morning, and Mr. Helms said our information was that the SA-2s were more effective at lower levels than Alsop stated. Senator Saltonstall asked if the SA-2s were an effective weapon. Mr. Helms said they were, and Senator Stennis asked if it was ground-to-air only. Mr. Helms said this was so and that no other types of missiles had been identified in North Vietnam.

5. Senator Stennis asked what the U. S. would do if the Chinese began to force the occupation of Cambodia and Thailand. Mr. Helms said that while our relationships with the Cambodians were quite unsatisfactory, on the other hand the Cambodians would

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be strongly opposed to a Chinese occupation and Sihanouk had his own country well in hand, commenting that the North Vietnamese also would not want a Chinese occupation. The Thais, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] have recognized the northeast border situation and should be able to control the insurgency there. Senator Stennis asked when we broke relations with Cambodia, and he also asked if there were any effective guerrillas there. Mr. Helms said it was 90 days ago and there were no real internal troubles in Cambodia.

6. Senator Saltonstall asked if Mr. Helms were gloomy, and he replied that he was--that our intelligence indicates that the North Vietnamese are confident they are going to win in the next few months. Senator Saltonstall asked if it were difficult to get intelligence on the problem, and Mr. Helms said it was very difficult in North Vietnam as there were really only 12 people in charge who knew what was going on; however, everything we can get in the way of intelligence by all means available bears out that the North Vietnamese public speeches and the Chinese public statements expressed accurately the intent of those governments. Mr. Helms stated that Ho Chi Minh leads the North Vietnamese government, which runs the National Liberation Front completely, so that while they maintain this Front they have no significant leader and there is no one in the Viet Cong with whom to sit for negotiations.

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8. Mr. Helms then briefed from the text on the Dominican Republic, and Senator Saltonstall asked about the news in the papers about the troop pull out. Mr. Helms said we are depending on the OAS and to back them up there are still 11,000 U. S. troops and 1,800 Latin American troops who should be able to handle the physical situation. Senator Saltonstall asked if Imbert accepts Garcia Godoy, and Mr. Helms said that while Imbert does not want him we have some sanctions which we could probably use effectively on him. Mr. Helms replied, in answer to Senator Saltonstall's question if

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the situation were such that we would be there awhile, that while we are very anxious to pull out U. S. forces they will probably be necessary for some time to come.

9. Mr. Helms then briefed on the situation in Colombia and Peru. Senator Stennis asked if we could so readily identify where bandits and insurgents are in these countries why couldn't we get them. Mr. Helms pointed out we have to work through the local governments and the military is typically ham handed and antagonizes the peasants, creating some sympathy for the insurgents so that they are warned and escape.

10. Mr. Helms briefed on Ecuador, and Senator Stennis asked if we had anything to do with [REDACTED] and what the stir was all about. Mr. Helms pointed out that the research plan had inadvertently gotten into the hands of the [REDACTED] communists who started a propaganda campaign which necessitated dropping the project; there was nothing wrong with the project but it had been badly handled.

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11. Mr. Helms touched briefly on the Congo. Senator Stennis asked for the number of mercenaries, and this figure was supplied after the meeting. Mr. Helms noted that it was his opinion that it had been very wise not to get any regular U. S. forces involved as mercenaries were much preferable from the point of view of our involvement and commitments. He said the mercenaries were mostly South Africans, Belgians, and West Germans.

12. Mr. Helms briefed on the Lebanon-Israel dispute over the Jordan waters and mentioned very briefly the chaos in Yemen. Senator Saltonstall asked about Algeria, and Mr. Helms said he felt that the turnover of Ben Bella was a net improvement, not that we would have any easy time with Boumedienne but he was a very strong nationalist and had been quite tough on the Chinese and the Soviets. Senator Saltonstall asked if Chou En-lai had had a rough time, and Mr. Helms said he had and calling off the conference had been a bad blow; the net effect was a Chinese failure.

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LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

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